

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11442

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SUBJECT: MIL'SHTEYN ON USTINOV AND PETROV

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1. SUMMARY. IN JULY 19 CONVERSATION USA INSTITUTE'S RESIDENT RETIRED GENERAL MIL'SHTEYN SAID FOLLOWING OF INTEREST ON USTINOV AND PETROV APPOINTMENTS:

-- USTINOV APPOINTMENT WAS NOT PRE-DECIDED, BUT HE WAS "ONLY CHOICE" BECAUSE OF UNIQUE CAPACITY IN WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT FIELD, WHICH NOW TAKES PRIORITY OVER TRADITIONAL PREOCCUPATIONS;
-- USTINOV HAS TOLD THE MILITARY HE IS NOT CONVERSANT WITH STRICTLY MILITARY MATTERS AND WILL RELY ON THEM IN THESE FIELDS;
-- YAKUBOVSKIY AND PAVLOVSKIY ARE SUPERB BUT NARROW SOLDIERS, AND PETROV, WHO WILL BE "BETTER THAN SHTEMENKO" BECAUSE OF POLITICAL BREADTH, REPRESENTS NEW GENERATION OF MILITARY LEADERS NOW COMING TO THE FORE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AT DAO LUNCHEON FOR USA INSTITUTE POL-MIL EXPERTS JULY 19, POL-MIL DEPARTMENT CHIEF M.A. MIL'SHTEYN, A RETIRED GENERAL STAFF OFFICER OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL RANK, WAS
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SOMEWHAT MORE EXPANSIVE (AFTER THE FACTS) ON APPOINTMENTS OF

USTINOV TO REPLACE GRECHKO AND OF FE MD COMMANDER V.I. PETROV TO REPLACE SHTEMENKO THAN HE HAD BEEN ON POST-GRECHKO PROSPECTS IN REMARKS REPORTED REF A.

3. ON USTINOV, MIL'SHTEYN SAID APPOINTMENT HAD NOT BEEN DECIDED BEFORE GRECHKO'S DEATH SINCE THERE HAD BEEN NO INKLING THAT HE WAS ILL. NEVERTHELESS, USTINOV WAS THE "ONLY CHOICE," MIL'SHTEYN WENT ON. HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT STRICTLY MILITARY MATTERS. HE HAD ALREADY TOLD THE MILITARY THAT HE WAS NOT CONVERSANT WITH MILITARY DETAILS AND EXPECTED TO RELY ON HIS GENERAL STAFF FOR EXPERT ADVICE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "MAIN PROBLEM" NOW IS WEAPONRY, MIL'SHTEYN SAID, AND HERE USTINOV IS A TREMENDOUS EXPERT IN WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND COST-ACCOUNTING.

4. ASKED ABOUT YAKUBOVSKIY, MIL'SHTEYN SAID HE HAD BEEN TO GENERAL STAFF SCHOOL WITH BOTH YAKUBOVSKIY AND GROUND FORCES COMMANDER PAVLOVSKIY, AND THAT WHILE THEY WERE SUPERBLY CAPABLE SOLDIERS THEY WERE ALSO "NARROW", AND NOT CANDIDATES FOR GRECHKO'S JOB. USTINOV HAD A BROAD VIEWS; IN PARTICULAR HE IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF COST EFFICIENCY IN PROCUREMENT.

5. USTINOV'S APPOINTMENT, MIL'SHTEYN CONCLUDED, SHOULD BE SEEN AS A POSITIVE SIGN FOR U.S. -SOVIET RELATIONS TOO.

6. ASKED ABOUT PETROV, MIL'SHTEYN SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HIM PERSONALLY, BUT KNEW HE WAS INTELLIGENT, CAPABLE AND "KIND". HE HAD A SUPERIOR POLITICAL SENSE, AND, MIL'SHTEYN THOUGHT, "WOULD BE BETTER THAN SHTEMENKO" IN WARSAW PACT MATTERS. IN FACT, HE WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NEW, YOUNGER GENERATION OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHICH IS NOW, NECESSARILY, COMING TO THE FORE.

7. COMMENT. MIL'SHTEYN'S STRESS ON USTINOV'S CAPABILITIES IN WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PREDICTION OF POSITIVE IMPACT ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP ARE NOT NEW, COMING FROM USA INSTITUTE (REF B). MORE INTERESTING ARE INFERENCES THAT USTINOV WAS CHOSEN AS A KIND OF SOVIET MACNAMARA (MIL'SHTEYN DID NOT DEMUR WHEN COMPARISON WAS MADE) BECAUSE WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT HAS REPLACED MORE TRADITIONAL PREOCCUPATIONS AS TOP POLITICAL PRIORITY IN MILITARY FIELD.

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